

By preliminary amendment, claims 17-22 and 25-26 were amended in a manner believed to place these within the elected group, that is, they are now properly dependent from an independent claim (or a dependent claim thereof) which has been elected.

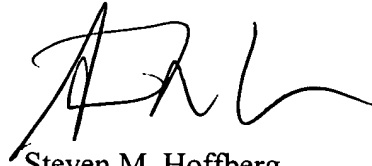
Applicant DOES NOT wish to elect ONLY claims 1-16, 23 and 24 to be examined. Rather, applicant has made an election of the invention as set forth in claims 1-16, 23 and 24 (Group I), which, by the amendments presented, now include all of claims 1-26.

It is respectfully submitted that there is not now, nor has there been, any ambiguity regarding the election, nor is there any contradiction in amending non-elected claims to read on the elected invention. In other words, original claims 17-22 and 25-26 are treated as being withdrawn from prosecution, with the amended claims treated as being newly added dependent claims.

If the Examiner seeks to impose an election requirement with respect to claims 17-22 and 25-26, that is his prerogative, subject to a clear statement of the basis for the requirement, and an opportunity for applicant to respond. The Examiner may, however, treat the prior response and the present response as a constructive election of Group I, claims 1-16 and 23-24, for prosecution on the merits, WITH TRAVERSE, with the non-elected claims deemed withdrawn pending a determination of allowable subject matter in the base claims.

It is respectfully submitted that the application is now in form for examination.

Respectfully submitted,



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